

war on drugs. He has cut drug enforcement programs. As Members heard, he has, in fact, been AWOL in the war on drugs. And now, in an election year, he has decided to do something about it.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly tragic that our children have been allowed to suffer for 3 years while the President was pursuing his true priorities.

□ 1115

PASS THE BIPARTISAN HEALTH CARE BILL

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, my Republican colleagues are trying to come to terms with the failure of their agenda. They are instead trying to repack-age their image. They would have us believe that they are on the side of working Americans. But let me tell my colleagues that their agenda in fact would hurt working Americans.

Just take a look at the issue of health care. There is today in this body a bipartisan bill to improve the health security for average working Americans. The bill would prevent the insurance companies from denying health coverage because of preexisting medical conditions. It would increase health care availability for all. And this bill has the support of Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate, but they will not bring it up for a vote. There has been no action and no activity on this bill, and they are trying to load it down with controversial proposals in order to try to defeat it.

I will quote from the Wall Street Journal this morning that says, "But passing the provisions that the House suggests, passing the provisions in the House, may set up a confrontation with the Senate" and the bill would not pass.

Mr. Speaker, if we are serious about helping working Americans, let us talk about health care security, bring up the bill.

WE NEED TO ENCOURAGE OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION AT HOME

(Mr. CALVERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, a strong domestic oil and gas industry not only means more jobs and a better economic future, but is essential for our Nation's national security.

Throughout the last decade America's oil and gas industry has lost a staggering number of jobs to sunnier business climates.

My Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee has been conducting hearings to highlight the need for a Federal energy policy that encourages domestic exploration and production.

This policy must allow our oil and gas producers to have greater public

land access while reducing the regulatory burden on doing business at home.

I have no doubt that this Congress will reverse recent trends and move toward a policy that encourages exploration and production to ensure a vibrant healthy economy.

CONDEMNING BOMBING ATTACKS IN ISRAEL

(Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to condemn in the strongest possible terms the deadly bombings that have terrorized the people of Israel for the past 9 days. In Jerusalem, in Ashkelon, and most recently in Tel Aviv, suicide bombers representing the Islamic fundamentalist group Hamas have taken more than 50 innocent lives, injured hundreds, and placed the mideast peace process in jeopardy. In this time of mourning and reflection in Israel, I extend my own personal condolences to the families of those killed in these senseless acts of violence.

Just 2 years ago, Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat stood on the south lawn of the White House and signed the declaration of principles which set the historic peace process in motion. This morning, in the wake of the bombings, that peace seems as distant and elusive as ever.

At this critical hour, we in the United States Congress must reaffirm our commitment to the goal of bringing peace to the Middle East, and pledge to vigorously support efforts that will swiftly bring to justice those who seek to undermine that peace through cowardly acts of violence.

RECOGNIZING THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

(Mr. BONILLA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the sacrifice and achievement of our Persian Gulf war veterans.

This month marks the fifth anniversary of the end of the war which liberated the small country of Kuwait and ensured access to the region's energy supplies.

Unfortunately, we have done little to reduce the threat of energy dependence.

Five years later the U.S. dependence on foreign oil has grown; America now imports 52 percent of its annual oil supply.

We import 9 million barrels of oil a day to satisfy demand.

For a country that in on the cutting edge of technology, there is no excuse for a lack of energy preparedness which places American lives at risk. U.S. pro-

ducers have the capability to tap into an estimated 60-year supply of oil and natural gas that lies undiscovered in America. And they can do this without threatening the environment. Five years ago we learned a lesson—we need to open the doors to energy independence to ensure our freedom from foreign tyrants' threats.

CUTS IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS

(Mrs. CLAYTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, it is inconsistent to talk about building for the future, while tearing down the present.

Yet, Members of this House seem ready to abandon education by making the largest cuts in our history, with overall funding for the Department of Education likely to be reduced by 25 percent.

In fiscal year 1949, 9 percent of the Federal budget was spent on education. This year it is about 1.4 percent. On education spending, we are headed in the wrong direction.

We talk about restoring families and helping our young people.

Yet, we take away the very key to their ability to have useful and productive lives—the opportunity for an education.

Recent national polls show that Americans overwhelmingly support education and believe that it should be a top priority of Congress. Instead of a tax cut for the wealthy, we should put more money into education for our children and for the future.

We must restore these cuts. We must invest in America's families, America's children, America's future workers. We must be prepared to meet the challenges of the changing global economy.

Stop the education cuts and secure America's economic future.

WE MUST SHIFT EDUCATION DECISIONS FROM WASHINGTON TO LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

(Mr. HUTCHINSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, President Clinton in his recent State of the Union Address proposed one more Federal education program, this one to provide merit-based scholarships to the top 5 percent of high school graduates, but the fact is there are already 47 scholarship and fellowship programs operated by the Federal Government, and this highlights a point made by the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GOODLING] at a press conference last week. He pointed out that our committee has discovered over 760 Federal education programs spanning 39 different agencies and departments. Many of these programs were designed to meet exactly the same goals, they overlap, they duplicate, and each has its own